

ACKERSON DEMAREST

~~Frederick Wootenlyke~~ Trading Post  
Main Street and Mill Road  
Park Ridge, Bergen County, New Jersey

HABS-NJ-176

HABS  
N.J.

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
District of New Jersey

Ackerson-Demarest Trading Post  
Main Street and Mill Road  
Park Ridge, Bergen County, New Jersey

Owner: Moses Rawiszer Estate

Date of Erection: About 1765

Architect:

Builder: Garret (?) Ackerson

Present Condition: Poor

Number of Stories: Two

Materials of Construction: Foundation - fieldstone

Exterior walls - frame  
construction, wide clap-  
boards

Interior walls - plaster;  
walls filled with mud and  
stone

The floors are wide pine  
planks on hewn oak beams

Inside brick chimneys

Roof - pitch

#### Historical Data:

The early history of this structure depends upon tradition more than upon fact. We have been unable to find any deeds early enough to prove the assertions made as to date of erection and builder. However, from descendants and local tradition we have been able to piece together what we believe to be a fairly accurate account. Mr. John H. Ackerman of

Woodcliff Lake, who is the great-great-grandson of Garret (?) Ackerson, says that the structure was built about 1765 by him for his nephew Cornelius Demarest who kept the store. Almost directly across the street is a stone house which was built by the same Ackerson about 1760. This would seem to bear out the contention that Ackerson built it. Other local sources give the name as Cornelius instead of Garret, both are family names. This Garret or Cornelius was supposed to have been a colonel of militia. There is no mention of any such individual in Stryker's list.

Our earliest record is the will of Garret Ackerson dated 1846 who left the homestead to his son Garret G. Ackerson who sold in 1857 to Levi Gurnee. The first mentioned Garret was the son of the builder. Gurnee in turn sold to Moses Rawiszer. At present the property is in the hands of his estate.

Local tradition claims that this was a trading post and that John Jacob Astor stopped here. This may or may not be the truth, but it is possible that he did travel old Pascack Road. Porter in his life of Astor says that about 1785 or 1790 he made trips through northern New Jersey along the line of the present Erie Railroad and was supposed to have followed the earlier Indian trails. All his biographers agree that he made trips through northern New Jersey. For that reason we have accepted the local tradition that he did come to the Old Demarest store.

#### Bibliography:

Porter, K. W. John Jacob Astor 2 Volumes  
Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1931

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Stryker, W. S. Official Register of  
the Officers and Men of New Jersey  
in the Revolutionary War Trenton,  
Nicholson, 1872

A search of Bergen County court  
records by Wallace Dunlop, Bergen  
County Office

Information from Mr. John H. Ackerman,  
Woodcliff Lake, and J. C. Storms,  
Park Ridge

Walter E. Pratt  
Supervising Historian

Approved:

SEYMOUR WILLIAMS, F.A.I.A.  
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